

CHAPTER 5 Other CEQA Considerations

Section 15126 of the *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA) Guidelines requires that all aspects of a project must be considered when evaluating its impact on the environment, including planning, acquisition, development, and operation. As part of this analysis, the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must also identify (1) significant environmental effects of the proposed project, (2) significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the proposed project is implemented, (3) significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of the proposed project, (4) growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project, (5) mitigation measures proposed to minimize significant effects, and (6) alternatives to the proposed project.

5.1 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Table 2-1 (Summary of Environmental Effects and Code Requirements/Mitigation Measures), which is contained in Chapter 2 (Summary) of this EIR, and Sections 4.1 through 4.14 of this EIR provide a comprehensive identification of the proposed project's environmental effects, including the level of significance both before and after mitigation.

5.2 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED IF THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED

Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. Development of the proposed project would result in the following significant and unavoidable project-related and/or cumulative impacts:

■ Air Quality

- > **Project Specific**—Peak construction activities associated with Option 1 or Option 2 of the proposed project would generate air emissions that exceed SCAQMD thresholds.
- > **Project Specific**—Daily operation of either Option 1 or Option 2 of the proposed project would generate air emissions that exceed SCAQMD thresholds.
- > **Project Specific**—Construction activities associated with implementation of either Option 1 or Option 2 of the proposed project would generate emissions that would result in an exceedance of localized significance thresholds for CO, NO₂, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} established by the SCAQMD, and, therefore, could expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.
- > **Cumulative**—The proposed project would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in nonattainment under an applicable

federal or State ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors).

■ Noise

- > **Project Specific**—Pile driving activities associated with the proposed project would result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels.
- > **Cumulative**—The proposed project's construction-related temporary increases in ambient noise levels (e.g., pile driving) would result in a cumulative impact.

■ Population and Housing

- > **Cumulative**—Because all cumulative residential development would ultimately contribute to the substantial exceedance of SCAG population projections for the City for the 2015 timeframe, the proposed project would have a considerable contribution to the cumulative impact.

■ Traffic

- > **Project Specific**— Under Year 2014 conditions, operation of either Option 1 or Option 2 of the proposed project could contribute to projected deficiencies on I-405.
- > **Project Specific**— Implementation of either Option 1 or Option 2 of the proposed project would contribute to projected regional freeway deficiencies in 2030, which is considered an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system.
- > **Cumulative**—Because the proposed project would contribute traffic to the projected freeway deficiencies, the project's contribution to this cumulative is considerable.

5.3 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of any significant irreversible environmental changes that the proposed project would cause. Specifically, Section 15126.2(c) states:

Uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts, and particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified. Section 15126.3(c)

Future development that would be permitted under implementation of the proposed project would entail the commitment of energy, human resources, and building materials. This commitment of energy, personnel, and building materials would be commensurate with that of other projects of similar magnitude, and none of these commodities are in short supply. Manpower would also be committed for the construction of buildings and public facilities necessary to support the new development.

Ongoing maintenance and operation of future mixed use development on the project site would entail a further commitment of energy resources in the form of natural gas, electricity, and water resources.

Long-term impacts would also result from an increase in vehicular traffic, and associated air pollutant and noise emissions. This commitment of energy resources would be a long-term obligation in view of the fact that, practically speaking, it is impossible to return the land to its original condition once it has been developed. However, as established in Section 4.14 (Utilities and Service Systems), the impacts of increased energy usage are not considered significant adverse environmental impacts.

In summary, implementation of the proposed project would involve the following irreversible environmental changes to existing on-site natural resources:

- Commitment of energy and water resources as a result of the operation and maintenance of future mixed use development that would be permitted
- Alteration of the existing topographic character of the site

5.4 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that this section discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic, population, or housing growth, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Growth-inducing impacts are caused by those characteristics of a project that tend to foster or encourage population and/or economic growth. Inducements to growth include the generation of construction and permanent employment opportunities in the service sector of the economy. A project could also induce growth by lowering or removing barriers to growth or by creating an amenity that attracts new population or economic activity. According to Section 6.0 of the General Plan EIR (Huntington Beach 1995), incorporated herein by reference, implementation of the General Plan would induce growth, particularly in the associated removal of impediments to growth (e.g., provision of new access to an area) and increased potential for economic expansion. The following activities have the potential to result in growth inducement:

- Development of additional housing supply
- Generation of employment opportunities, including short-term, construction employment opportunities

A project's growth-inducing potential does not automatically result in growth, whether it is a portion of growth or actually exceeds projected levels of growth. Growth at the local level is fundamentally controlled by the land use policies of local municipalities or counties, which are determined by the local politics in each jurisdiction.

5.4.1 Additional Housing Supply

The proposed project is a General Plan Amendment (GPA) and a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA). The proposed General Plan designation would be CR-F2-sp-mu (F14). The newly established F14 FAR category would specify an overall maximum total mixed use building area FAR of 1.75. Two GPA/ZTA options have been analyzed in this EIR. Development under GPA/ZTA Option 1 (Option 1) would result in 713 residential units. Development under GPA/ZTA Option 2 (Option 2) would result in 538 residential units. As the project site is currently an exclusively commercial development, implementation

of either Option 1 or Option 2 would introduce new residential uses which would directly induce growth.

The proposed project would allow horizontally integrated mixed-use in addition to the currently allowed vertical mixed-use, and would increase the allowable residential density from the currently allowed 25 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) up to a maximum 45 du/ac. However, the maximum commercial development and residential density would be limited to only one of the following development combinations on the project site:

- **Option 1 (Increased Residential)**—Maximum total building area FAR of 1.75, commercial FAR of 0.2, and 45 du/ac, which would permit a maximum of 713 residential units and 138,085 sf of commercial uses. Compared to the existing General Plan designation, this GPA would represent an overall square footage increase of 172,606, through a decrease in commercial-only building area of 207,128 sf, and an increase of 317 residential units; *or*
- **Option 2 (Increased Commercial)**—Maximum total building area floor area ratio of 1.75, commercial FAR of 0.6, and 34 du/ac, which would permit a maximum of 538 residential units and 414,255 sf of commercial uses. Compared to the existing General Plan designation, this GPA would represent an overall square footage increase of 172,606, through an increase in commercial-only building area of 69,042 sf, and an increase of 142 residential units.

These two options represent the overall development scenarios that could occur under the proposed project; however, only one option would ultimately be constructed. Both of these potential development combinations result in a maximum total building area FAR of 1.75 or 1,208,245 sf of total commercial and residential development, which is an increase in overall square footage (by approximately 172,606 sf) compared to what is currently allowed on site. The primary difference between the two options is the ratio of residential and commercial uses. Under the proposed project, Option 1 would represent an increase in residential uses and Option 2 would represent an increase in commercial uses. Approval of either option would satisfy the proposed changes to the General Plan to allow a mixed-use development, as outlined above. The GPA and ZTA (established by one of the two options) would be subject to approval by the Planning Commission and City Council and would likely result in growth. Due to the number of housing units that would be created under either scenario, the project would be considered growth-inducing with respect to housing.

5.4.2 Employment Generation

Future development of the proposed project would generate short-term, construction-related employment opportunities. These opportunities would occur over the entire duration of the construction period. Given the supply of construction workers in the local work force, it is likely that these workers would come from within the Orange County area, and no in-migration of workers would be anticipated. Due to the nature of construction activities, the employment opportunities resulting from project construction would not be considered permanent.

In addition, future development would generate long-term employment opportunities associated with commercial uses on the project site. Long-term employment opportunities at the project site could induce growth in the region and could potentially be considered a growth-inducing impact to the region.